DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 218 895 EC 143 160

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TITLE Caveat Emptor: Creative, Gifted, and Talented Are Different Entities.
PUB DATE Apr 82
NOTE 11p.; Paper presented at the Annual International Convention of the Council for Exceptional Children (60th, Houston, TX, April 11-16, 1982, Session T-79) and CEC/TAG Topical Conference on The Gifted and Talented (Orlando, FL, December 4, 1981).

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Creativity; *Definitions; Elementary Secondary Education; *Gifted; Models; *Student Characteristics; Talent

ABSTRACT

To clear up some of the existing confusion in gifted education terminology, the paper suggests several alternative ways of looking at the terms talented, creative, and gifted, with particular emphasis on the last two. Noted among distinctions are that the gifted have a global intellectual ability, the creative have the ability to produce new/unique imaginative products/ideas/solutions, and the talented have ability in a specific area. Other distinctions between the gifted and creative are listed. A model which takes into account interrelationships among gifted, talented, and creative ability is suggested. (SB)

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CAVEAT EMPTOR: CREATIVE, GIFTED, AND TALENTED ARE DIFFERENT ENTITIES

by

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ED218895

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Presented at

CEC/TAG Topical Conference

on the Gifted and Talented

Orlando, Florida

December 4, 1981

and

CEC International Convention

Houston, Texas

April 1982

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EC143160

The major problem in the area of "gifted" education, today, may no longer be how to educate the gifted, but rather who they really are: that is, what specific children are we talking about? Are we talking about children with high IQ scores or those with special talents or those who demonstrate some creative abilities?

It has been some twelve years since the United States Office of Education surveyed 239 experts in the field in order to arrive at a common definition of giftedness. The results of this survey constitute the definition used today by many states and the U.S. Department of Education. (While it still is in existance) As a result, the use of this definition may have further compounded the confusion. Within the definition can be found components of other definitions of not only gifted, but also talented and creative. In addition, the definition may, in reality, recognize over 40% of the population. It is as follows:

> Gifted and talented children are those, identified by professionally qualified persons, who by virtue of outstanding abilities are capable of high performance. These are children who require differentiated educational programs and/or services beyond those normally provided by the regular school program in order to realize their contribution to self and society. "High performance" might be manifested in any or a combination of these areas:
>
> 1. general intellectual ability
> 2. specific academic aptitude
> 3. creative or productive thinking
> 4. leadership ability
> 5. visual and performing arts
> *(6. psychomotor ability)

*Eliminated from Federal definition in 1980, but still included in many state definitions.

Even Gallagher (1975) in his widely used text, Teaching the gifted child, began his first chapter by asking the question, "Who are the gifted children in our society?" He, as many other writers of texts, spends the first chapter(s) of his book reviewing many different approaches employed in defining and identifying the gifted child. Newland in his 1976 text, The gifted in socio-educational perspective, stated that "educators have defined the gifted in dubious ways," and that "the distracting array of terminology used in regard to the gifted must be set in order," (p.11) In reviewing the literature from 1939 to 1976, Newland found much confusion about the relationship between creativity and giftedness, including:

1. "Many writers, especially technically untrained ones, presumed a close relationship, if not an identity, between giftedness and creative behavior, such that if the individual was creative (and particularly if adult) he was presumed also to be highly intelligent."
2. "Many persons--both qualified and unqualified--have held oversimplified or unjustified expectations about the information which even good 'intelligence' tests could yield about children..."
3. "There was an easy and uncritical equating of the psychologist's concept of divergent thinking and the educator's perception of creative thinking."

Newland (1976) continued by pointing out that the relationships between creativity and giftedness has been the "focus of much professional curiosity." Are tests used to identify the gifted also identifying the creative? To what extent do we find creativity within the whole child population? To what extent are those identified as creative also gifted and so on?

The purpose of this paper is not to proliferate the confusion, but rather to suggest several alternative ways of looking at the terms talented, creative and gifted with particular emphasis on the last two.

An understandable distinction may be that the word "gifted" implies a capacity for or an actual global ability in numerous areas. Gifted could be equated to Wechsler's (1958) "g" intellectual ability. "Talented", on the other hand, implies an ability (or potential ability) to perform in a specific area or in one of the "s"s that collectively make up the "g". One, for example, could be talented in specific areas as science or art or creative writing or music or drama or leadership or psychomotor areas without being gifted. "Creativity" can be defined (and evaluated) in terms of a product. It is the production of new or unique products or ideas or the development of skills leading to highly imaginative problem solving behaviors. Baren (as quoted pp 233-234 in Gallagher, 1976) defines creativity...as the ability to bring something new into existence... Since human beings are not able to make something out of nothing, the human act of creation always involves a reshaping of given materials whether physical or mental. The 'something new' is a form made up by the reconstruction of, or regeneration from something old".

Expanding upon this notion of general, specific, and product abilities, Hamilton (1981) has identified the differences as follows:

Gifted	Creative	Talented
Intellectual ability (global)	Ability to produce new/ unique imaginative products/ideas/solutions	Ability in a specific area
130 and above IQ	Usually 115-125 IQ	Varies depending upon test emphasis
Convergent thinkers	Divergent thinkers	Either-depending upon activity
Highly logical	Numerous and unique responses	Performance oriented-the end product and one aspect of either giftedness or creativity

Gifted	Creative	Talented
Generally gives the one best possible answer (therefore the 130 or above IQ test score) (Ex: Who discovered American? Ans: Columbus)	Answers which are adaptive to reality, but not always the most logical (Example: Who discovered America? Ans: Leif Erickson or Indians crossing a pennisula from China)	High level of skill in a particular area or art form and precise in this area. Talent-Products (or performances) which are seen or heard.

Almost 20 years ago Getzels and Jackson (1962) compared children with high IQ scores and those identified as highly creative. They found no significant differences in overall school achievement but did find that teachers indicated preference in working with the high IQ students. Major differences they found between the two groups included the following four comparison statements: (and these still nold true today)

High IQ	Highly Creative
Valued high grade and maintained goal directed behavior.	Valued range of personal interests. Were emotionally stable and had active sense of humor.
Wanted to exhibit personal qualities that would lead to success in adult life.	Valued personal qualities and needed immediate gratification.
Self-image compatible with what they thought would bring approval.	General self-image opposed to what they thought teacher preferred.
Preferred to follow/deal with single correct themes.	Expressed imagination, originality, multi-dimensional themes in writing.

Since 1977 I have reviewed several dozen graduate student term papers dealing with their perceptions as verified by their literature reviews of the gifted and creative. As I read these I underlined the key descriptor terms or (traits) which were attributed to each type of child. There were a number of differences noted such as teacher attitudes and structure versus impatience with routine. However, there was a great deal of overlap between the two groups making it quite difficult or almost impossible to isolate the theoretically truly gifted

child from the theoretically truly creative child by just identifying learning or classroom behaviors. The differences which do exist may be more subtle than just academically based descriptor terms.

Gifted	TRAITS	Creative
Perceptive and open		Fluency - numerical, abstract, concrete, social
Inquiring mind		Flexibility
Critical of fact and others		Originality
Sense of value and ethics		Unusual sensitivity
Deals well with abstractions and generalizations		Independence
Learns rapidly		Confidence
Long attention/concentration span		Self-assertive
Analysis qualities		Non-conforming - school adjustment problems
Mature Vocabulary		Imaginative
Tremendous energy		Analysis and synthesis qualities
Prefers to work independently		Curiosity
Exhibits creative type thinking		Drawn to complex and ambiguous
Doesn't fear being "different"		Introspective
Well liked by teachers		Fantasy-prone
Shows initiative		Perceived as behavior problems by teachers
Humor		Energetic
Assumes responsibility		Originality of ideas and expressions
Seeks approval		Persistent
Enjoys structure		Humor
Wide range of abilities/interests		Risks
Becomes absorbed/involved in areas of self interest		Impatient with routine
Becomes bored with routine		Open to new experiences/ideas
Takes risks		

Logical, analytical, inquiring mind

Is questioning, intuitive, speculative, non-conforming and manipulative

Elaborates and hypothesizes well

Curiosity

Self-initiating

Artistically self-expressive

Generates alternatives

Willingness for complexity

Imaginatively employs knowledge and information

Highly developed thinking function

Highly theoretical and aesthetic values

Ability to accept conflict/tension

Ability to defer closure and judgment

Concern with both outside and inside worlds

Ability to toy with elements and concepts

An internal locus of evaluation

Skilled performance of the traditional arts

Production of a novel rational product

Birth of a recognizable idea

Integration of sensing, feeling, thinking and intuiting functions

High ability overlooked by peers and teachers

Actually, what the field may be dealing with is seven distinct groups with the last three on the list being the most common. The* model suggests that if we can understand the interactions of gifted, talented, and creative, we can then design programs for each distinct group. These groups are:

1. Gifted
2. Talented
3. Creative
4. Gifted-Talented-Creative
5. Creative-Talented
6. Gifted-Creative
7. Gifted-Talented

*My thanks to D. Harris, S. Weddel and M. McCormick for their assistance in identifying the appropriate terminology used in each area.

The model must be viewed as an active one of on-going inter-relationships with many characteristics common to more than one group. In addition, many children may move from group to group at different times during their maturational periods. It is not all inclusive in respect to the descriptor terms used, and an alert teacher could probably add many, many other descriptors (beyond the traits list previously mentioned) for each group. With these understandings, the model is presented for consideration as a vehicle for more clearly identifying the differences/similarities among the groups.

In summary, the purpose of this paper has been an attempt to differentiate and define the terms gifted, creative and talented. A discussion of the differences was presented along with a list of values (Getzels and Jackson, 1962) and a list of traits identified as common to the gifted and creative groups. This paper was concluded with a presentation of a model which could assist in programming children identified employing the U.S. Department of Education definition. The model should be considered as probably asking more questions than providing answers. But it is a beginning point by which teachers can develop educational intervention so vital to the further development of their special skills.

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